

Message Text

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SUBJ: ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING ANTI-VIETNAMESE RIOTS IN NORTHEAST
THAILAND

1. "THE NATION" OF MAY 24 QUOTES DEPUTY INTERIOR MINISTER BUNLOET LOETPRICHA AS SAYING THAT CIA OPERATIVES ENGINEERED THE RECENT ANTI-VIETNAMESE RIOTS IN NONG KHAI AND SAKON NAKHON PROVINCES. BUNLOET ALLEGED THAT SEVEN OF ABOUT 20 THAI RIOTERS ARRESTED IN NONG KHAI MAY 18 WERE POSITIVELY FOUND TO BE WORKING FOR THE CIA. BUNLOET SAID THE CIA WAS APPARENTLY TRYING TO SABATOGUE THAILAND'S EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH NORTH VIETNAM AND SOUTH VIETNAM. THE EMBASSY ISSUED A DENIAL OF THESE ALLEGATIONS. DEPUTY COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER ANAN CHAISAENG NEVERTHELESS REPEATED THE ALLEGATIONS MAY 27.

2. WHILE CIA HAD ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ANTI-VIETNAMESE RIOTS, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THEY WERE NOT ENTIRELY LOCAL AND SPONTANEOUS. GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN, CHIEF OF STAFF OF SUPREME COMMAND, SPOKE APPROVINGLY OF THE RIOTS IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE POLITICAL/MILITARY COUNSELOR MAY 26 AND SAID HE EXPECTED THEM TO CONTINUE. WE ALSO KNOW THAT LT. GEN. CHAMNIAN PHONGPAIROCHANA, COMMANDANT OF THE ARMED FORCES INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS CENTER WHICH IS SUBORDINATE TO SUPREME COMMAND WAS IN NONG KHAI MAY 22. PRACHA KUNAKASEM, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INDICATED TO THE POLITICAL/MILITARY COUNSELOR MAY 21 HIS SUSPICION THAT EITHER

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KRIANGSAK OR GENERAL SAIYUT KOETPHON, COMMANDER OF THE

INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS COMMAND (ISOC), MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN THE RIOTS. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, PRACHA ALSO SPECULATED THAT THE DRV MIGHT AT LEAST THEORETICALLY WANT TO PROVOKE SUCH INCIDENTS IF IT WERE LOOKING FOR A PRETEXT FOR ATTACKING THAILAND. ISOC OFFICERS DISCLAIM ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RIOTS AND POINT THE FINGER AT THE DRV AND LEFTIST POLITICAL ACTIVISTS IN THAILAND.

3. COMMENT: OUR INFORMATION ON THE ANTI-VIETNAMESE RIOTS IS STILL TOO TENUOUS TO DRAW ANY DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS AS TO WHO IS SPONSORING THEM. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED, HOWEVER, IF SOME ELEMENTS OF THE THAI MILITARY WERE ENCOURAGING THEM IN ORDER TO EMBARRASS THE GOVERNMENT AND UNDERMINE ITS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH NORTH VIETNAM. MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT SUCH AS BUNLOET AND ANAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO SHIFT THE BLAME TO THE U.S. IN ORDER TO PREVENT AN OBSTRUCTION TO THE TALKS WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE DELEGATION NOW TAKING PLACE IN BANGKOK. WHITEHOUSE

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